

## CHAPTER 28

### *Al-Qaṣaṣ*: The Narrative

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 9 sections; 88 verses)

This chapter known as *The Narrative* is devoted chiefly to Mûsâ's story and draws attention pointedly to Mûsâ's prophecy regarding the Prophet's advent. It is said by some to have been revealed to the Holy Prophet when fleeing from Makkah on his way to Madînah, at a place known as Jahfah (‘Abd Allâh ibn ‘Abbâs (Companion) and the *Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî). According to others, however, only verse 85, which predicted a triumphal return of the Holy Prophet to Makkah, was revealed there (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû ‘Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî). The latter seems to be the correct view. See introductory note on the 26th chapter. The Prophet's likeness to Mûsâ is the chief theme of this chapter, and the revelation of Mûsâ is here spoken of as clear evidence of the truth of the revelation of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. The first four sections of the chapter are taken up with a recital of the chief incidents of the life of Mûsâ from the time of his birth to the time that he successfully led the Isrâ’îlites out of Egypt, together with the drowning of the hosts of Egypt. Here we find many of the details of this period not given elsewhere. Mûsâ's narrative is followed by showing in the fifth section that a prophet like him had now appeared, to whose truth the revelation of Mûsâ bore a clear testimony. The sixth section upholds the truth of the revelation of the Qur’ân, while the seventh shows that its opponents will be humbled. The eighth instances Korah, whose very wealth led to his ruin, and is a warning to the opponents against placing too great faith upon earthly possessions, or it, may be a warning to the Muslims against the time when they will grow rich and powerful. The chapter ends with a declaration of the ultimate triumph of the Holy Prophet, and of his triumphal entry into the very city from whence he was now being expelled.

### SECTION 1: History of Mûsâ

In the name of Allâh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

## **1 Tâ Sîn Mîm**

**2** These are the verses of the Book that makes manifest.

**3** We recite to you the story of Mûsâ and Pharaoh with truth, for a people who believe.

**4** Surely Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into parties, weakening one party from among them;<sup>a</sup> he slaughtered their sons and let their women live. Surely he was one of the mischief-makers.

**5** And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the leaders, and to make them the heirs,<sup>a</sup>

**6** And to grant them power in the land, and to make Pharaoh and Hâmân and their hosts see from them what they feared.<sup>a</sup>

**4a.** The two parties were the Israelites and the Egyptians, the latter being made the taskmasters of the former. This refers no doubt to the persecutions of the Muslims. The Quraish, the stronger party, wanted to crush the weaker party of the Muslims.

**5a.** By making them heirs is not meant that they would be made heirs to Pharaoh's possession, but heirs to a kingdom in the promised land of Canaan. And this refers also to the establishment of the kingdom of Islâm and the vanquishment of its persecutors.

**6a.** Hâmân seems to have been a minister of Pharaoh. He is spoken of again in verse 8 and verse 38, and also in 29:39 and 40:24, 36. The Hâmân spoken of in Esther 3:1 is a different person. Pharaoh and his counsellors feared that the Isrâ'îlites, who were aliens in the land of Egypt, might one day become powerful and supreme in the land. Hence they oppressed and persecuted them in various ways. Yet the Divine intention was to bring about what Pharaoh feared. Even such was the Divine intention with regard to the persecuted Muslims.

**7** And We revealed to Mûsâ's mother, saying: Give him suck; then when you fear for him, cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve; surely We shall bring him back to you and make him one of the messengers.

**8** So Pharaoh's people took him up that he might be an enemy and a grief for them.<sup>a</sup> Surely Pharaoh and Hâmân and their hosts were wrongdoers.

**9** And Pharaoh's wife said: A refreshment of the eye to me and to you — slay him not; maybe he will be useful to us, or we may take him for a son. And they perceived not.

**10** And the heart of Mûsâ's mother was free (from anxiety).<sup>a</sup> She would almost have disclosed it, had We not strengthened her heart, so that she might be of the believers.

**11** And she said to his sister: Follow him up. So she watched him from a distance, while they perceived not.

**12** And We did not allow him to suck before, so she said: Shall I point out to you the people of a house who will bring him up for you, and they will wish him well?

**13** So We gave him back to his mother that her eye might be refreshed, and that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allâh is true. But most of them know not.<sup>a</sup>

**8a.** It was not the object of Pharaoh's people that the child should be their enemy, but this ultimately happened. *Lâm* ("that") used in this sense is called *lâm al- 'âqibah*.

**10a.** Her heart became free from anxiety on account of the assurance which she had received through Divine revelation; the words that follow show that her heart had been strengthened with patience, so it cannot be said to have become devoid of patience. In fact, *fârigh* often, used elliptically, signifies *free from care* or *anxiety* or *disquietude* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane)

## SECTION 2: History of Mûsâ

**14** And when he attained his maturity and became full-grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge. And thus do We reward those who do good (to others).

**15** And he went into the city at a time of carelessness on the part of its people, so he found therein two men fighting — one being of his party and the other of his foes; and he who was of his party cried out to him for help against him who was of his enemies, so Mûsâ struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: This is on account of the *shaitân*'s doing; surely he is an enemy, openly leading astray.<sup>a</sup>

**16** He said: My *Rabb*, surely I have done harm to myself, so do You protect me; so He protected him.<sup>a</sup> Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

**17** He said: My *Rabb*, because You hast bestowed a favour on me, I shall never be a backer of the guilty.

**13a.** The reference is clearly to the opponents of the Holy Prophet, who did not know that the promise of Allah, as given to the faithful, would prove true.

**15a.** The word “this”, in Mûsâ’s statement, refers to the punishment which he had given to the Egyptian, the meaning being that it was on account of his devilish deed that the Egyptian had been so punished. The Rabbinical explanation of Exodus 2:12, which mentions Mûsâ’s slaying the Egyptian, is that the Egyptian merited death “because he had forced an Isralitish woman to commit adultery with him” (Jewish Encyclopaedia, volume ix, p. 48). The Qur’ân does not name the offence, but there is no doubt that it calls his offence *a devilish deed*. For the meaning of *ghafr*, see 2:286a. Verse 17 shows clearly that Moses did not consider himself as one who had done an unjust deed or helped a guilty person. See also 26:14a.

**16a.** Mûsâ’s prayer is not evidence of his being guilty, for the words *zalamtu nafsî* mean *I have caused detriment to myself*, the primary significance of *zulm* being *naqs* (*Tâj al-‘Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîd Murtaḍâ*), or *making to suffer loss or detriment* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and this is the meaning adopted in 7:160 and 18:33. *Zalama-hû* also signifies *he imposed upon him a burden that was above his power or ability*. The meaning here is that he had risked his own life in giving help to another.

**18** And he was in the city, fearing, waiting, when lo, he who had asked his assistance the day before was crying out to him for help. Mûsâ said to him: You are surely one erring manifestly.<sup>a</sup>

**19** So when he desired to seize him who was an enemy to them both, he said: O Mûsâ, do you intend to kill me as you did kill a person yesterday? You only desire to be a tyrant in the land, and you desire not to be of those who act aright.

**20** And a man came running from the remote part of the city. He said: O Mûsâ, the chiefs are consulting together to slay you, so depart (at once); surely I am of those who wish you well.

**21** So he went forth there from, fearing, awaiting. He said: My *Rabb*, deliver me from the iniquitous people.

### SECTION 3: History of Mûsâ

**22** And when he turned his face towards Midian, he said: Maybe my *Rabb* will guide me in the right path.

**23** And when he came to the water of Midian, he found there a group of men watering, and he found besides them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What is the matter with you? They said: We cannot water until the shepherds take away (their sheep) from the water; and our father is a very old man.

**18a.** Mûsâ had helped the man on the first occasion because he was oppressed, but now this very man was oppressing another. Therefore he refused to help him.

**24** So he watered (their sheep) for them, then went back to the shade, and said: My *Rabb*, I stand in need of whatever good You may send to me.

**25** Then one of the two women came to him walking bashfully. She said: My father<sup>a</sup> invites you that he may reward you for having watered for us. So when he came to him and related to him the story, he said: Fear not, you are secure from the iniquitous people.

**26** One of them said: O my father, employ him; surely the best of those that you can employ is the strong, the faithful one.

**27** He said: I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you serve me for eight years; but, if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will, and I wish not to be hard on you. If Allah please, you will find me one of the righteous.<sup>a</sup>

**25a.** The Qur'ân does not state how many daughters the man had; it only speaks of two of them being in charge of their father's flock.

**27a.** Christian critical opinion discovers here is another confusion. Because Jacob had made an agreement with Laban to serve him for seven years as a condition of marrying one of his daughters (Genesis 29:18), it is alleged that this fact must have been present in the Prophet's mind in a confused state, giving rise to the story relating to Moses' serving Jethro for eight or ten years. According to Rabbinical accounts, Moses lived with Jethro for ten years, which corroborates the Qur'ânic story in substance (see *Jewish Encyclopaedia*), and there is nothing improbable in the circumstance that he may have served him during that period and married one of his daughters. But what is stated here has really a deeper significance beneath it. In

Moses' stay at Midian for ten years, there is a prophetic reference to the ten years of the Prophet's life at Madīnah. The mention of eight years has another underlying significance, for it was after eight years that the Prophet came back to Makkah as a conqueror, a clear reference to which is contained further on in verse 85: *He Who has made the Qur'ân binding on thee will surely bring thee back to the Place of Return.* This occurred exactly eight years after his Flight. That such is the real significance of relating this narrative is made clear by the Qur'an itself further on in verse 45, where the Prophet is thus addressed: *And you was not dwelling among the people of Midian, reciting to them Our messages.* It is, as it were, to say that it was Moses that lived among the people of Midian, but his episode really conveys the news of what will happen to you.

It may be added here that Moses was paid his wages, and the condition of his staying in Midian for eight or ten years was as much in his own interest as in the interest of Jethro, for as the Bible narrative shows, Pharaoh had died by the time that Moses' stay in Midian had come to an end.

**28** He said: That is (agreed) between me and you; whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there will be no injustice to me; and Allâh is surety over what we say.

#### SECTION 4: History of Mûsâ

**29** Then when Mûsâ had completed the term, and was travelling with his family, he perceived a fire on the side of the mountain. He said to his family: Wait, I see a fire; maybe I will bring to you from it some news or a brand of fire, so that you may warm yourselves.

**30** And when he came to it, he was called from the right side of the valley in the blessed spot of the bush: O Mûsâ, surely I am Allâh, the *Rabb* of the worlds:

**31** And cast down your rod. So when he saw it in motion as if it were a serpent, he turned away retreating, and looked not back. O Mûsâ, come forward and fear not; surely you are of those who are secure.

**32** Insert your hand into your bosom; it will come forth white without evil, and remain calm in fear. These two are two arguments from your *Rabb* to Pharaoh and his chiefs. Surely they are a transgressing people.<sup>a</sup>

**33** He said: My *Rabb*, I killed one of them, so I fear lest they slay me.

**34** And my brother, Hârûn, he is more eloquent in speech than I, so send him with me as a helper to confirm me. Surely I fear that they would reject me.

**35** He said: We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both an authority, so that they shall not reach you.<sup>a</sup> With Our signs, you two and those who follow you, will triumph.

**36** So when Mûsâ came to them with Our clear signs, they said: This is nothing but forged enchantment, and we never heard of it among our fathers of old!

**37** And Mûsâ said: My *Rabb* knows best who comes with guidance from Him, and whose shall be the good end of the abode. Surely the wrongdoers will not be successful.

**38** And Pharaoh said: O chiefs, I know no deity for you besides myself; so kindle a fire for me, O Hâmân, on (bricks of) clay, then prepare for me a lofty building, so that I may obtain knowledge of Mûsâ's Allâh, and surely I think him a liar.<sup>a</sup>

**32a.** See 7:108a, 20:20a, 22a.

**35a.** The meaning is, so that they will not be able to injure you.

**38a.** Pharaoh mocks at the idea of the *Rabb* of the *samâwât* and the earth, and derisively commands one of his ministers to prepare bricks — such being the significance of *kindling a fire on clay* — and to erect a lofty building so that he may have a peep into the *samâwât* to discover the *Rabb* of the *samâwât* and the earth.

**39** And he was unjustly proud in the land, he and his hosts, and they deemed that they would not be brought back to Us.

**40** So We caught hold of him and his hosts, then We cast them into the sea, and see what was the end of the iniquitous.

**41** And We made them leaders who call to the Fire, and on the day of Resurrection they will not be helped.<sup>a</sup>

**42** And We made a curse to follow them in this world, and on the day of Resurrection they will be hideous.

## SECTION 5: A Prophet like Mûsâ

**43** And certainly We gave Mûsâ the Book after We had destroyed the former generations — clear arguments for human beings and a guidance and a mercy, that they may be mindful.

**44** And you was not on the western side when We revealed to Mûsâ the commandment, nor was you among those present;<sup>a</sup>

**45** But We raised up generations, then life became prolonged to them. And you was not dwelling among the people of Midian,<sup>a</sup> reciting to them Our messages, but We are the Sender (of messengers).

**41a.** Pharaoh is thus made a prototype of evil, and the opponents of the Holy Prophet are warned that by walking in Pharaoh's footsteps they will meet a similar fate.

**44a.** Mûsâ's prophecy about the advent of the Prophet — of a *prophet like him* from among the Ishmaelites, the brethren of the Isrâ'îlites — was so clear that one would think that the Prophet was there at the side of the mountain and Mûsâ saw him with his own eyes. Hence the words, *you was not on the western side (of the mountain), nor was you among those present*. The opening words of the next verse show that a very long time had elapsed between these two prophets. The clear prophecy of Mûsâ of the appearance of a prophet *like unto him* was fulfilled after about two thousand years, and yet none of the prophets who followed Mûsâ one after another had ever claimed to be a *prophet like Moses*, not even "Jesus Christ", the last of the line of the Isrâ'îlite prophets.

**46** And you was not at the side of the mountain when We called, but a mercy from your *Rabb* that you may warn a people to whom no warner came before you, that they may be mindful.<sup>a</sup>

**47** And lest, if a disaster should befall them for what their hands have sent before, they should say: Our *Rabb*, why did You not send to us a messenger so that we might have followed Your messages and been of the believers?

**48** But (now) when the Truth has come to them from Us, they say: Why is he not given the like of what was given to Mûsâ? Did they not disbelieve in that which was given to Mûsâ before? They say: Two enchantments backing up each other! And they say: Surely we are disbelievers in both.<sup>a</sup>



**45a.** Why is Midian mentioned in particular, though Mûsâ stayed there for a short time; see 27a. Mûsâ lived in Midian for ten years, just as the Prophet passed ten years of his life at Madînah, yet what a transformation was wrought in the course of these ten years! This very fact was a clear proof of his truth.

**46a.** This verse throws light on the significance of the foregoing verses: *You was not there, but it was Divine mercy that put a prophecy into the mouth of Mûsâ regarding you.* This is made clear by the words *a mercy from your Rabb that you may warn....*

The people to whom no warner had come before were the Arabs. Compare 32:3; 36:6.

**48a.** The disbelievers did not adopt any one firm position against the Holy Prophet, and whenever one objection was shown to be erroneous, they took refuge in another.

At the advent of the Prophet they said that he should have received a revelation like the revelation of Mûsâ, but when the likeness was pointed out to them, and they were told that their fate would be like the fate of the opponents of Mûsâ, they said that both Mûsâ and Muḥammad were deceivers who enchanted people by their eloquence, the one helping the other, and therefore they believed neither in the one nor in the other.

**49** Say: Then bring some (other) Book from Allâh which is a better guide than these two, I will follow it — if you are truthful.<sup>a</sup>

**50** But if they answer thee not, know that they only follow their low desires. And who is more erring than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from Allâh? Surely Allâh guides not the iniquitous people.

## SECTION 6: The Truth of Revelation

**51** And certainly We have made the Word to have many connections for their sake, so that they may be mindful.<sup>a</sup>

**52** Those to whom We gave the Book before it, they are believers in it.<sup>a</sup>

**53** And when it is recited to them they say: We believe in it; surely it is the Truth from our *Rabb*; we were indeed before this, submitting ones.

**49a.** The meaning is that, if you do not admit the truth of either revelation, you should show some other revelation existing in the world, which should offer better guidance. This statement only draws attention to the fact that the revelation granted to Mûsâ and that granted to the Holy Prophet both occupy a higher position than any other

revelation. And this is in fact true, for among all the sacred books of the world the Bible occupies a position second only to the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. The words, however, do not signify that the Bible occupies a position equal to the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. For their comparative merits see 5:44a, 48a. See also 2:106a.

**51a.** *Wassala* signifies *he joined* or *connected much* or *he made* (a string) *to have many joinings* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtaḍâ* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). What is implied here is that the word of Allâh, as contained in the Qur'ân, is made to have many points of connection with previous revelation, so that it may be the easier for them to be reminded of its truth. Even if they did not believe in previous revelation, the broad points of likeness in the principles of two different prophets appearing at such a distance of time from each other, among entirely different nations, and under totally different circumstances, and the fulfilment of the prophecies uttered by one in the other, afforded conclusive evidence of the truth of them both. That the reference is to the connection with the previous revelation is also shown by the verse that follows, where those who have been given the Book are clearly spoken of.

**52a.** It is not meant that all those who have previously been given the Scriptures believe in the Qur'ân. The verse only draws attention to the fact that all believe in the truth of revelation from Allâh, and they cannot deny the points of connection between the two revelations, the truth of the fundamental principles and the fulfilment of prophecies. But only those would believe who have submitted themselves already to Allâh, as the verse that follows shows.

**54** These will be granted their reward twice, because they are steadfast, and they repel evil with good and spend out of what We have given them.<sup>a</sup>

**55** And when they hear idle talk, they turn aside from it and say: For us are our deeds and for you your deeds. Peace be to you! We desire not the ignorant.

**56** Surely you can not guide whom you love, but Allâh guides whom He pleases; and He knows best those who walk aright.<sup>a</sup>

**57** And they say: If we follow the guidance with you, we should be carried off from our country. Have We not settled them in a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind are drawn? A sustenance from Us — but most of them know not.<sup>a</sup>

**58** And how many a town have We destroyed which exulted in its means of subsistence! So those are their abodes: they have not been dwelt in after them except a little. And We are ever the Inheritors.<sup>a</sup>

**54a.** The reason for a double reward — which only means a *greater reward* — is given in the words that follow: *Because they are steadfast and they repel evil with good and spend out of what We have given them.* They had to suffer persecution, and not only did they remain steadfast in these great trials, but they repelled the evil of their persecutors with good, and in addition to all this made great sacrifices in the cause of Truth. See also 33:31a, 57:28a.

**56a.** It is related that when Abû Tâlib was on his deathbed, the Holy Prophet asked him to believe in Divine Unity. Abû Jahl, being by him at the time, dissuaded him from doing so, saying that he should not desert the religion of his fathers. Abû Tâlib died an unbeliever, and the words *you can not guide whom you love were* a comfort to the Prophet (Bukhârî 65: xxviii, 1). But the words are true in a general sense as well. The Prophet wished that all people should accept the Truth and better their lives. But all this was to be brought about gradually.

**57a.** The verse speaks first of the unfounded fears of those who thought that the weakness of the Muslims would result in the seizure, death, or expulsion of those who accepted the faith of Islâm. In reply they are told that the prophecies which declare Makkah to be a safe and sacred territory, to which people will flock in all ages, must come to fulfilment, and Makkah will ultimately be theirs for whose sake these prophecies were uttered.

**59** And your *Rabb* never destroyed the towns, until He had raised in their metropolis a messenger, reciting to them Our messages, and We never destroyed the towns except when their people were iniquitous.

**60** And whatever things you have been given are only a provision of this world's life and its adornment, and whatever is with Allâh is better and more lasting. Do you not then understand?

#### SECTION 7: Opponents shall be brought low

**61** Is he to whom We have promised a goodly promise, which he will meet with, like him whom We have provided with the provisions of this world's life, then on the day of Resurrection he will be of those brought up (for punishment)?<sup>a</sup>

**62** And the day when He will call them and say: Where are those whom you deemed to be My associates?

**63** Those against whom the word has proved true will say: Our *Rabb*, these are they whom we caused to deviate — we caused them to deviate as we ourselves deviated. We declare our innocence before Thee. Us they never worshipped.<sup>a</sup>

**58a.** That is, even now the Divine kingdom will be established, and the true believers in Allâh will be made masters of the country.

**61a.** There are two parties spoken of here: the Prophet and his followers, who have received a goodly promise from Allâh, though weak and oppressed at the time, and the powerful enemy, who has all the provisions of life in his possession, but who will one day be called upon to receive judgment.

**64** And it will be said: Call your associate-gods. So they will call upon them, but they will not answer them, and they will see the chastisement. Would that they had followed the right way!

**65** And the day He will call them, then say: What was the answer you gave to the messengers?

**66** On that day excuses will become obscure to them, so they will not ask each other.<sup>a</sup>

**67** But as to him who repents and believes and does good, maybe he will be among the successful.

**68** And your *Rabb* creates and chooses whom He pleases. To choose is not theirs. Glory be to Allâh and exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)!

**69** And your *Rabb* knows what their breasts conceal and what they proclaim.

**70** And He is Allâh; there is no Deity but He! His is the praise in this (life) and the Hereafter; and His is the judgment, and to Him you will be brought back.

**63a.** All commentators agree that by *those against whom the word has proved true* are meant *the leaders in unbelief* (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Al-Shaikh Mu'în al-Dîn ibn Safî al-Dîn and the *Kashshâf* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Qâsim Mahmûd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharî). Their saying *Us they never worshipped*

shows that these very leaders are spoken of as the deities whom their followers worship.

**66a.** They will not be able to offer an excuse, for the vanity of the false excuses, which satisfied them here, would then become manifest to them. Nor will they ask each other, for each will know the falsity of the excuses of the others.

**71** Say: Do you see if Allâh were to make the night to continue incessantly on you till the day of Resurrection, who is the deity besides Allâh who could bring you light? Will you not then hear?

**72** Say: Do you see if Allâh were to make the day to continue incessantly on you till the day of Resurrection, who is the deity besides Allâh that could bring you the night in which you take rest? Do you not then see?

**73** And out of His mercy He has made for you the night and the day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks.

**74** And the day when He will call them and say: Where are My associates whom you pretended?

**75** And We shall draw forth from among every nation a witness and say: Bring your proof. Then shall they know that the Truth is Allâh's and that which they forged will fail them.

## SECTION 8: **Korah's Wealth leads him to Ruin**

**76** Korah was surely of the people of Mûsâ, but he oppressed them, and We gave him treasures, so much so that his hoards of wealth would weigh down a body of strong men.<sup>a</sup> When his people said to him: Exult not; surely Allâh loves not the exultant.

**76a.** The story of Korah, or *Qârûn*, his revolt against the leadership of Mûsâ and Hârûn, and his being swallowed up by the earth, is given in Numbers 16. The only addition of any importance to the story as given in the Qur'ân is the mention of his wealth, a fact noticed in Rabbinical literature (Jewish Encyclopaedia), according to which the fabulous renown of his wealth was so great that the keys of his treasures formed a load for three hundred mules. The word *mafâtih* as occurring in the Qur'ân is plural of *maftah*, which means a *hoard*, or *treasure*, or *buried property* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It is also plural of *miftâh*, meaning a *key*,

but *kunûz* (meaning treasures, sing., *kanz*) being in the plural, the personal pronoun in *mafâtiha-hû* does not refer to *kunûz* but to Korah; accordingly *mafâtiḥ* denotes *treasures*.

There may be a reference in the mention of Korah's wealth to the modern materialistic tendency of making the accumulation of wealth the great object of life to the utter neglect of the Truth. The hankering after wealth and the amassing of gold leads undoubtedly to ruin, as it is leading the world today.

**77** And seek the abode of the Hereafter by means of what Allâh has given you, and neglect not your portion of the world, and do good (to others) as Allâh has done good to you, and seek not to make mischief in the land. Surely Allâh loves not the mischief-makers.

**78** He said: I have been given this only on account of the knowledge I have. Did he not know that Allâh had destroyed before him generations who were mightier in strength than he and greater in assemblage? And the guilty are not questioned about their sins.<sup>a</sup>

**79** So he went forth to his people in his finery. Those who desired this world's life said: O would that we had the like of what Korah is given! Surely he is possessed of mighty good fortune!

**80** But those who were given the knowledge said: Woe to you! Allâh's reward is better for him who believes and does good, and none is made to receive this except the patient.

**81** So We made the earth to swallow him up<sup>a</sup> and his abode. He had no host to help him against Allâh, nor was he of those who can defend themselves.

**78a.** They will not be asked to give any explanation for their sins, as Allah is All-Knowing.

**82** And those who had yearned for his place the day before began to say: Ah! (Know) that Allâh amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence for whom He pleases of His servants; had not Allâh been gracious to us, He would have abased us. Ah! (Know) that the ungrateful are never successful.

## SECTION 9: The Prophet will return to Makkah

**83** That abode of the Hereafter, We assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth or to make mischief. And the good end is for those who keep their duty.

**84** Whoever brings good, he will have better than it; and whoever brings evil, those who do evil will be requited only for what they did.

**85** He Who has made the Qur'ân binding on you will surely bring you back to the Place of Return.<sup>a</sup> Say: My *Rabb* knows best him who has brought the guidance and him who is in manifest error.

**81a.** The meaning conveyed is that he perished. *Khasf* also signifies *abasing*, *humbling*, or *lowering* another, and the verb is *khasafa* in this case (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtadâ*; *Al-Qâmûs al-Muhîṭ* (Dictionary), by *Shaikh Majd al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Ya'qûb Al-Firozâbâdî* and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). I adopt this significance of *khasafa bi-nâ* ("abased us") in the next verse.

**85a.** The word *ma'âd* means *the ultimate place of one's returning* (from '*ada*, meaning *he returned*) (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The word *ma'âd* here has been taken to mean Makkah according to an interpretation given by '*Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs* (Companion) and the *Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faïd Murtadâ* accepts this interpretation, because the conquest of it was promised to the Prophet, so that it was the place to which he would return. But Makkah is really called *ma'âd*, or Place of Return, because the pilgrims return to it (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). According to some this verse was revealed on the Prophet's departure from Makkah, i.e., on his way to Madînah. It contains a clear promise of the Prophet being brought back to the city from which he was now being expelled.

**86** And you did not expect that the Book would be inspired to you, but it is a mercy from your *Rabb*, so be not a backer up of the disbelievers.

**87** And let them not turn you aside from the messages of Allâh after they have been revealed to you, and call (human beings) to your *Rabb* and be not of the polytheists.

**88** And call not with Allâh any other deity. There is no Deity but He. Everything will perish but He. His is the judgment, and to Him you will be brought back.